
Imprimatur.

Guil. Jane, R. P. D.
Hen. Episc. Lond. à
sacris domesticis.

Mar. 4. 167¹.

Imprimatur.

Guil. Jane, R. P. D.
Hen. Episc. Lond. à
sacris domesticis.

Mar. 4. 167¹.

Go shew thy self to the Priest :

S A F E

ADVICE

For a Sound

PROTESTANT.

B Y

L. Womock, D.D. A. S.

Ecclus. 11. 7.

*Blame not before thou hast examined the truth :
Understand first, and then rebuke.*

L O N D O N :

Printed for *Robert Clavel*, at the Peacock in
St. Paul's Church-yard. 1679.

• from the left to the right :

3 A 1

A D V I C E

For a sound

W H I T E T A N T

W H I T E T A N T

W H I T E T A N T

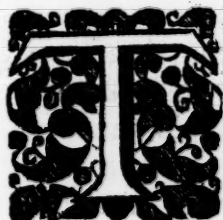
W H I T E T A N T

W H I T E T A N T

W H I T E T A N T

W H I T E T A N T

SAFE ADVICE
FOR A
Sound Protestant.



THE occasion of this Paper was a Discourse upon the cleansing of the Leper; Mat. 8. 1, 2, 3, 4; and particularly that head of Application which was managed as followeth:
[We do stedfastly believe that every man must give an account of himself to God; and is it not then, at least advisable, that he should shew himself unto the Priest; that he may be the better prepared for that account? I know the Law of *Moses* does not bind us, in its Authority; but yet, it may direct us, by a parity of reason. As that Law was a dispensation by the hand of *Moses*, so it was peculiar to the Jewish Nation. But as the *Moral* part of that Law (being the Law of Nature, in Print, and set forth for better information) is of perpetual use and
B obligati-

obligation ; so the *Ceremonial* part, having a shadow of good things to come, does invite us earnestly to look after the substance, wherein we may possibly be concerned.

The Apostle tells us, that under the letter of a Carnal Ordinance, many times, there lies hid a Spiritual signification. And this very Leprosie of the body did represent another, much more malignant, noisom, and pernicious, the Leprosie of Sin, that overspreads and defiles the soul. Now, was there a Ministry of divine institution to take cognizance of that, to inspect the person so infected, and to give judgment of his condition ? And is there no provision made in this case of spiritual Leprosie ? Was God more careful (then) of his peoples bodies, than he is (now) of their souls ? No certainly : Christ came a Physician for the soul, and applied himself to sinners, and their Ghostly maladies. *The whole have no need of the Physician, but the sick ; I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.* Christ is a Priest for ever ; and though (for that reason) he can have no successor : Yet, because, in the execution of that Office, he sits now in heaven, he was pleased to appoint his substitutes

Mat. 9. 12.

Mar. 2. 17.

Luk. 5. 31.

to administer (here) in his Church on earth.

As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you : Joh.20.21.

(And) *he that receiveth you, receiveth me ; and* Mat.10.40.

he that beareth you, beareth me. And unless we Luk.10.16.

value our health more than our salvation, we will, no doubt, be as forward to shew our selves unto the Priest, upon a Spiritual, as those Jews were, upon their Carnal account. And this is especially requisite in three Cases.

(1.) To inform our Judgment. (2.) To assure our Conscience. And (3.) to credit our Communion. [Conference with the Priest is requisite ;

1. To inform the Judgment. Many times, doubtful cases do arise, and the difficulties which do occur, in the conduct of a Christians life, are not few, nor to be neglected. And what Oracle can we so prudently appeal unto, as that Sacred faculty, whose skill and learning is design'd on purpose to minister to such as stand in need of their instruction and conduct? *For the Priests lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the Law at his mouth : for he is the Messenger of the Lord of Hosts.* If it were so in those days, much more under the dispensation of the

Mal.2.7.

Gospel, wherein the *Veil* is taken from the face of the Priest; and his *Ministration* does so far exceed in glory, 2 Cor. 3. 9, & 13.

2. Conference with the Priest is very requisite to assure the Conscience. A little guilt does afflict and trouble a tender Conscience; and a scruple, many times (where, really, there is no such guilt at all, as is imagined) may much disquiet it. Now, to have assurance from a better judgment than my own; or (if not a better) from a judgment, cloathed with a Sacred Office and Authority; to have my doubts cleared by the discourses of a prudent pious person, and my jealousy of guilt taken off by a solemn absolution; This, one would think, should bring in a considerable satisfaction. He that duly weighs the circumstances, with which the power of the Keys was delivered by our Saviour, cannot but be convinced, that there is more solid comfort in that Ministry than is ordinarily imagined. You may read attentively the bequest, *Joh. 20. 20, 21, 22, 23.*

3. It is requisite to shew our selves to the Priest, to credit our Communion. The Apostle has laid down this Canon; *If any man that is called a Brother* (a Christian by Profession,

Profession) *be a fornicator, or covetous, or an Idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner,* I would not have you give so much scandal to the Church, or so much countenance to such a person, as (out of design or choice) *to eat with him.* A man known to be of a loose Conversation, (in any single, or more instances of wickedness) though he has not been delated to his Superiours, not presented, or accused before any Court of Judicature; yet being conscious to himself of scandal given to the Church whereof he is a Member, it will very well become him, as an humble, as an ingenuous, as a penitent and serious person, to shew himself to the Priest, as well to obtain his advice and prayers, as his approbation and encouragement, and for the satisfaction of those with whom he does communicate. He that denies the usefulness of such addresses upon this threefold account, doth evacuate the use of the Ministry, almost, to all intents and purposes.

If he denies the first, to what purpose are our Catechisings, and our Sermons, unless he makes it his business to frequent them, not to inform his judgment, but to censure the

discourse, and traduce the Preacher? If he denies the second, what becomes of the benefit of Absolution, of good directions and advice, with all Ghostly comfort, administered, towards the peace of afflicted Consciences? If he denies the third, he takes away one of the best expedients to prevent the scandal of an indiscriminate and free admission to the Lords Supper.

But not to reflect upon the Sentiments or Censures of rash men (whose passions are governed by their interest, and their judgments by their passions,) let us learn, what were the sober thoughts of such as were most zealous of a prudent and pious Reformation. We will begin with *Herman-*
nus Archbishop of *Colen*, in his worthy attempt to that effect. Where he saith, "That
 "private Confession and Absolution are to
 "be retained in the Churches; not that
 "there is any necessity of the particular enumeration of sins: But because, (that Ca-
 "techising) that Instruction and Consolation,
 "on, which does accompany this wholsom
 "practice, is very profitable, and, to many,
 "very necessary; that they may testify their
 "heartly sorrow for their sins past, and their
 "firm

Bonne 1545.
 Cap. de Conversione à peccatis,
 m. fol. 6.

“firm purpose of amendment for the future;
“and that they may not be left in the dark,
“and doubtful of their pardon and forgive-
“ness. Next we will observe the *Augustan*
Confession, tendred with all humility (in
the year 1530.) to the Emperour *Charles* *De Confessione.*
the Fifth, from which the very Name and
Title of *Protestants* was derived, their ad-
dress ending with these words, [*De quo hic*
etiam solemniter & publicè Protestamur.] In that
Confession they do highly extol the power of
the Keys, and the benefit of private Abso-
lution; that it does declare and apply the
Gospel to terrified Consciences; And this
application it makes, not (only) to all in
general, but to every single person in parti-
cular, as our Saviour Christ affirms, [*Thou*
hast gain'd thy Brother.] That this Absolution
is therefore to be retained in the Church; and
that the voice of the Gospel in this Ministry
is to be believed as a voice from Heaven.
And seeing Confession does make way for
the benefit of this Absolution, and foras-
much as the Rite and Custom thereof does
preserve, in the people, the understanding of
power of the Keys, and of the Remission of
sins; and besides, seeing that Conference,
there

there had, is of great advantage for mens instruction and warning; Therefore (say they) we do diligently retain the use of Confession in our Churches; yet teaching them withal, that the particular enumeration of sins is not necessary of divine right, nor as mens Consciences to be burdened with it, &c. To this Confession subscribed, *John Duke of Saxony Elector, George Marq. Brandenburg, Ernest Duke of Lunenburgh, Philip Lantgrave of Heß, John Frederick Duke of Saxony, Francis Duke of Lunebergh, Wolfgangus Prince of Anhalt, the Senate and Magistrates of Nurenborgh, the Senate of Kentlingen.*

In the Confession of Saxony offered to the Council of Trent, 1551. they declared thus, Concerning private Confession to be made to the Pastors, we do affirm that the Custom of private Absolution is to be retained in the Church: And we do constantly retain it for many weighty causes; though we teach also, that a particular recital of all sins, is neither of divine command, or possible; but apt to make faith the more feeble, and pious minds the more doubtful.

In the Confession of *Wittenbergh* (of The Transla-
tor into Eng-
lish refers it to
Aufsurge, ut
infra 1586. 1552.) they declare, Though they do not think the enumeration of their sins before a Priest, of necessity to Salvation, nor of any merit toward the remission of sins : Yet they take care, as far as may be, that Confession of sins in general may be retained in their Churches for two reasons; The first, that the more ignorant sort of people may, by that way of Conference, be the better admonished and instructed in all things necessary : The other, That upon this occasion, the Gospel of Christ, touching the remission of sins, may be particularly applied, and the assurance of Absolution be either apprehended, or confirmed.

In the Confession of *Bohemia* they declare, 1535.
That though they do not injoyne, nor require a particular enumeration of sins, yet they teach that Penitents should have recourse to the Priest, (whom the English Translation calls, the Physician of their souls) to confess their sins to God before him, and (as that Translator wordeth it) to declare their grief, trouble, and remorse; to take advice and counsel, how they may avoid sin for the future, and to seek for absolution and
C. pardon

Edit. by Tho.
Thomas at
Cambridge,
1586.

Joh. 2.

pardon by this Ministry of the Keys, which is Christs Institution. They teach men also to magnifie this Absolution; and undoubtedly to believe what this power of the Keys promiseth, seeing it is the voice of Christ himself and exprest by his command, *Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose sins ye remit, they are remitted, &c.* and they would have them know that by this power and Ministry of the Keys, and the authority of Christs Word, all their sins are pardoned. To leave Foreiners,

Let us see what the Advice and Practice of the Church of *England* is: (1.) She is very positive in her Order, Rules, and Canons, that all persons should shew themselves unto the Priest, to be Catechized, and to hear Sermons, for the Information of their Judgments. But (2.) as to such as find themselves disquieted in mind and conscience, it is rather a matter of advice than of command; for thus she does invite and persuade them to apply themselves for their own benefit.

The first Exhortation before the Communion.

[And because it is requisite, that no man should come to the holy Communion, but with a full trust in Gods mercy, and with

with a quiet Conscience ; therefore if there be any of you who cannot quiet his own Conscience, but requireth further comfort or counsel ; let him come to me, or to some other discreet and learned Minister of Gods Word, and open his grief, that by the Ministry of Gods holy Word, he may receive the benefit of Absolution, together with Ghostly counsel and advice, to the quieting of his Conscience, and avoiding of all scruple and doubtfulness.] Nor is the Church of *England* less tender or cautious in her advice and order at the *Visitation* of the Sick ; for the *Rubrick* before the Absolution runs thus : [Here shall the sick person be moved to make a special confession of his sins, *if he feels his Conscience troubled with any weighty matter.* After which Confession the Priest shall absolve him (*if he humbly and heartily desire it.*)

I confess, that in the third case, that of Scandal, her Rules and Canons are more strict ; and it would be much for the honour of God, and of our Profession, if the iniquity and looseness of these times would allow us to be no less strict in the observation and practice of them. The Rubrick is this, [If any one that offers to come to the

See the Rubrick before the second Service.

holy Communion be an open and a notorious evil liver, or have done wrong to his Neighbour, so that the Congregation be thereby offended; the Curate having knowledge thereof, shall advertise him, in no wise to presume to come to the Lords Table, till he has openly declared his repentance, and given satisfaction to the offended Congregation, and the party whom he hath wronged. The like order the Curate is to take with such as live in habitual hatred and malice. These are the terms and ends, for and upon which the Church of *England* sends her Members for their advantage and remedy to the Priests Office. And whether the Presbyterian Party be more modest and gentle in their Requiries we shall now consider.

(Not to look so far back as their *Directory*, and their *Humble Advice* to the *Parliament*,) In their *Grand Debate* by the Kings Commission, amongst their *Exceptions* against some passages in the *Liturgie*, they desire the Ministers power both to admit and keep from the Lords Table, may be in these words, [The Minister shall admit none to the Lords Supper, till they have made a credible

credible profession of their Faith, and promised obedience to the Will of God, and that all possible diligence be used, as is for the instruction and reformation of scandalous offenders, whom the Minister shall not suffer to partake of the Lords Table, until they have openly declared themselves to have truly repented and amended their former naughty lives. And not satisfied with a weeks warning for the Sacrament, they expostulate thus, [Is there leisure of self-examination, and restitution, and satisfaction, and going to the Minister for counsel to quiet his Conscience? In their *Reformation* of the *Liturgie* they say thus, [They only are to be invited to the Lords Table, and to come, that truly repent and believe, and unfeignedly consent to the terms of the Covenant: [Then follows an odd Parenthesis] (though all are not to be invited thus to believe and repent, and so to come.) But those are to be admitted, by the Pastors, if they come, who, having the use of reason to understand what they do, and examine themselves, have made a personal profession of Faith, Repentance, and Obedience.] And treating of Catechizing, and the approbation of those

Pag. 124.

Pag. 48.f.

Pag. 66.

that are to be admitted to the Lords Supper :
They give this order ; [Let the Minister
either go to their houses, or rather appoint
the persons (of several Families) in their
courses, to come to him for personal instru-
ctions, where he may confer with those,
who are unmeet to be Catechised publickly,
or unwilling to submit to it, and there let
him acquaint them with the substance of
Christian faith and duty.] And they add this
caution, [But let him not in publick or
private meddle with impertinences, nor
sift people to know things unfit, or unne-
cessary to be disclosed.] And a little after
their order is very strict and positive, in
these (and many other words) [Let
none be admitted by the Minister to the
Sacrament of the Lords Supper, till, be-
ing instructed in the Christian Religion,
(they) do openly make a credible professi-
on of their own faith and promise to be
obedient to the Will of God. (And they
add) A profession is credible when it is
made understandingly, seriously, volunta-
rily, deliberately, and not nullified by con-
tradiction in Word or Deed. (And a lit-
tle after) [It is not private persons only,
but

Pag. 67.

but the Pastors of the Church, that must approve of this Profession. Therefore before any are admitted to the Lords Supper, they shall give a good account of their Knowledge, Faith, and Christian Conversation conformable thereunto, unto the Pastors of their respective Congregations, or else shall produce a Certificate, that they have been approved or admitted to the Lords Supper in another Congregation, of which they were Members, and that by an allowed Minister upon such approved profession as aforesaid.] And they close their charge with these words, [Let no Minister be enforced to admit any himself to the Lords Supper, who hath been clancularly and irregularly approved. Those that after this Approbation prove scandalous offenders, shall not by the Minister be suffered to partake of the Lords Table, until they have openly declared themselves to have truly repented and amended their former naughty lives.] Thus much for the Presbyterian Brethren.

We see then, that this Lesson [*Go shew thy self to the Priest*] is a Doctrine, which all Parties find themselves more or less concerned

concerned in. The Church of *Rome* imposes it with a very strict severity, to the over-charging and insnaring of tender Consciences; and makes use of it to very wicked ends and purposes; to fish out mens tempers and inclinations; that as occasion serves, they may employ them to destroy Princes, and subvert States and Kingdoms. Examples whereof we have in *William Parry*, and *Edward Squire* in the time of *Queen Elizabeth*. The Presbyterians exact the same duty with no less zeal (I hope to no ill intent) but with an imperious rigour.

The Church of *England* does advise and order the practice of it, to these effects, *i. e.* To prevent Scandal, to promote Repentance, to advance Instruction, and to administer both Caution and Comfort to the Penitent; or (to use the words of our most excellent Litany,) *To strengthen such as do stand, to comfort and help the weak-hearted, to raise up them that fall, and finally to beat down Satan under our feet.*

And to make it (like the yoke of a meek and gracious Master) the more practicable, light, and easie, she puts it on with as much moderation, gentleness, and lenity as is imaginable

imaginable. Whether the Discourse above recited be not of this temper, and calculated for the very same Meridian, I leave the judicious Reader to determine.

Some men perhaps may think it favours as much of the Presbyterian, as others do of the Popish Doctrine; yet really it is neither the one nor the other: But the genuine Doctrine of the Church of *England*, according to Antiquity, and the best Reformed.

Nevertheless it hath been suggested that the said Doctrine was Popery, or wheel'd apace towards it. This suggestion I shall not impute to design or want of Charity: But to a mistaken zeal, or Godly jealousy, awakened in the Insinuants, by the iniquity and bloody Practices of the Popish Party. And to clear the Innocency of my own Doctrine, I shall only appeal to the Protestants of *Forein Churches* (forementioned) with the *Requiries* of the *Presbyterian Brethren*, so strictly insisted on since his Majesties happy Restauration; and particularly I shall produce Mr. *Richard Baxter* (never taken for a friend to Popery) to be my *Compurgator*. In his *Nosegay* presented to Mr. *Joseph Caryl*, this Pag. 88. is his positive and avowed Doctrine, [" Let
D " me

“ me be bold to tell my Brethren of the Mi-
 “ nistry, that though I deny them to have *Cra-*
 “ *dit* or *Authority* against the known Word of
 “ God, yet so great is their *Credit* and *Autho-*
 “ *rity*, even as *Teachers* and *Guides* of the
 “ Church, in Causes agreeable to the Word,
 “ and in Causes to the People doubtful and
 “ unknown, and in Causes left by the Word
 “ to their determination, (the Word deter-
 “ mining them but generally) that I think
 “ the *ignorance* of this Truth hath been the
 “ *main Cause* of our sad *Confusions* and *Schisms*
 “ in *England*, and that the *Ministers* have been
 “ guilty of it, partly by an over-modest
 “ *concealing* their *Authority*, and partly by an
 “ *indiscreet opposition* to the *Papists* Error of the
 “ *Authority* of the Church ; And I think till
 “ we have better taught, even our *Godly* peo-
 “ ple, what *credit* and *obedience* is due to their
 “ *Teachers* and *Spiritual Guides*, the Churches
 “ of *England* shall never have *peace*, or any
 “ good or established *Order*. I say again, we
 “ are broken for want of the knowledge of
 “ *this truth* ; and till this be known, we shall
 “ never be well bound up and healed.]

The Reader will please to take notice, that
 this is so far from *Popish Tyranny*, that it is
 our.

our *Presbyterian Moderation*, and Mr. *Baxters* own *Sober Sadness*; and he thought it a Truth of so great importance, that he set a hand in the *Margin* to remark it, and point it out to every *Reader*, as most worthy of his observation. And such as would see more of his thoughts in this point, he refers them to what he has written on it, in his *Method for peace of Conscience*, and in the *Second Part* of his *Book of Rest*, and in the *Preface* to that Part.

The Premises well considered, I am apt to believe, the *Judicious Reader* will conclude, that to adhere stedfastly to the sober and prudent establishment of the Church of *England*, is very *safe advice* for all *Sound Protestants*.

F I N I S.
